



James E. McGreevey
Governor

State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection

Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner

July 2003

Dear Reader,

I am enclosing the final report of the New Jersey Comparative Risk Project. The report ranks land use change, air pollution and invasive species as major threats to New Jersey's environment and people.

The research and report, funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, was prepared by a 19-member independent panel assisted by experts on Technical Advisory Committees. They analyzed and ranked 88 chemical, physical and biological factors/stressors according to their relative impacts on human health, ecological quality and socioeconomic conditions.

The report provides 178 detailed analyses of stressors from acid precipitation and benzene to West Nile Virus and zinc. The findings indicate the development of open space poses a significant risk to New Jersey's environment and people, along with indoor pollution, invasive species and outdoor air pollution.

The report's ranking of land use changes as one of New Jersey's top environmental risks reinforces the importance of Governor James E. McGreevey's fight against sprawl.

As Governor McGreevey has said, poorly planned development continues to consume 50 acres of the state's open space daily and citizens are paying the price through depleted drinking water supplies, road congestion, polluted air and critical habitat loss. We must end unchecked sprawl and promote smart growth in order to improve the environment and the quality of life for our families.

I want to thank the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, and its members, for their hard work and dedication related to this project.

This work brings attention to environmental problems that DEP will continue to address. By analyzing the various risks to New Jersey's environment and people, we can prioritize and better inform our decision-making about how to address problems like sprawl and other threats to our natural resources and health.

A complete copy of the report and its appendices are also available on the DEP web site at www.nj.gov/dep.

Sincerely,

Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner